

How does one become confident & assertive?

I believe that we are born naturally confident. But as we start interconnecting to our world, we are fed messages that build our belief system brick by brick. Sadly, this wall of beliefs is often negative, and we grow up lacking in confidence. We believe that this is the way it is, and we don't believe that we can change it.

I grew up with poor role models. I was almost pathologically shy. My lack of confidence manifested itself as defensiveness, but I made a decision to change it. I want you to make this decision right now.

In my experience, confidence is underpinned by truth, the truth of who you are behind the mask, and the certainty that no matter what people say about you or to you, your emotional strength will not be depleted.

There are thousands of ways that can help you to change, but here are a few pointers:

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- **Ask 'HOW' questions**

Do you ask such questions as 'why am I like this, why is my life so rubbish, why do people walk all over me?' If so, this has to stop now! Grab the dictionary of your mind and erase the word 'why'.

Start asking questions like 'how can I change. What can I do to become more confident? How can I gain respect from other people? How can I find the right people to help me to overcome my lack of confidence? Keep asking these powerful questions and you will soon see results.

- **Write down a list of your personal beliefs.**

If you have a belief that you are unlovable, do you think that this would help you to be loved? Look at each belief and ask 'how does this belief serve me?' if it doesn't, then change it! For example, amend '*I am unlovable*' to '*I am lovable*'. At first it will feel false, but by continually feeding this positive message to your brain, you will create new neural pathways that will automatically change your behaviour and begin to make you more lovable!

Remember that beliefs **are not truths**. As children we have little choice but to adopt the belief system of our parents, and later our peer groups & society. In my opinion, **EVERY** belief you have **MUST** be challenged if you want to improve your life.

- **Write down a list of personal values.**

If a value was to be confident, would you want this so that people don't walk over you? If so, this is defined as a '**moving away** from' value. What the brain actually processes is '*people walk over me*'.

Rewrite your values to be more proactive, for example 'I want to be confident so I feel happier in myself, can get a great job, follow my dreams and find a great partner'. This is defined as a '**moving towards**' value, and the brain processes '*happier, great partner, great job, follow dreams*'.

Does that make sense?

- **Set Personal Boundaries.**

The first time is the hardest. Breathe deeply, and calmly say something like, 'I **feel** upset by what you said.' By saying '*I feel*' you minimise potential defensiveness. Never say 'you **made me** feel' as no one can actually **make you** feel or do anything. You reserve the power of choice over your emotions and actions. It is only a matter of learning how to manage your emotional responses.

If the person continues, repeat your statement by saying 'if you continue to talk to me this way, I will have to leave/put the phone down/walk away – whichever is appropriate.

Don't give away your power by becoming defensive. You do not have to own someone else's behaviour or opinion. Learn to be emotionally intelligent and choose your responses. It takes practice but, once you commit to this, it will change your life for the better.

These few steps are some of the most powerful ones for inaugurating change. But its work is progress until it becomes a way of being. Take one step at a time, and don't beat yourself up when you 'get it wrong' Life is a journey of experiences. Whether they be good bad or indifferent, attach no great meaning to each, other than to acknowledge your personal growth and learning.

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